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FROM AMBASSADOR HUME TO UNDER SECRETARY BURNS

E.O. 12958: N/A
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SUBJECT: C-175 Authority Needed to Advance NAMRU

1. (SBU) Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director General Retno has asked for a one-on-one meeting with you during your visit to discuss the future of NAMRU. Your discussion will be most successful if you can inform her that the State Department has issued Circular 175 authorization to negotiate the establishment of an Indonesia-United States Center for Biomedical and Public Health Research (IUC).

2. (SBU) Visas for NAMRU personnel expire December 31. We understand informally that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will extend the visas one final time until March 31, 2010. Further extensions for NAMRU personnel would not be possible, forcing NAMRU to close down and its staff to depart. In September, HHS Secretary Sebelius and then Health Minister Supari agreed to establish the IUC under joint civilian control. The MOU establishing this center would enable Naval medical personnel to obtain new visas and continue their important work on emerging and infectious tropical diseases. It would also provide a mechanism for the Center for Disease Control, the National Institutes of Health, and other government laboratories to engage with Indonesian on important research.

3. (SBU) In order to negotiate the formation of the IUC before NAMRU personnel are forced to leave at the end of March, we need Circular 175 authorization now. HHS is coordinating the interagency process. If we have Circular 175 authority, your message to Ambassador Retno would be clear: we understand the political sensitivity of this issue; we support the creation of the IUC as the focal point of our future health cooperation; and we are ready to begin negotiations immediately on the memorandum of understanding to establish the IUC.

HUME